



PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: Faisal Haq; Hari K. Lalgudi
Assignee: Cisco Technology, Inc.
Title: QUORUMS IN MEET-ME CONFERENCE CALLS
Serial No.: 09/608,586 Filing Date: June 30, 2000
Examiner: Ovidio Escalante Group Art Unit: 2645
Docket No.: CIS0091US

Austin, Texas
April 17, 2006

MAIL STOP AF
COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
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Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

PRE-APPEAL BRIEF REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Dear Sir:

Applicants hereby request review of the final rejection, mailed December 16, 2005, in the above-identified application. This Request is being filed concurrently with a Notice of Appeal. No amendments are being filed with this request. This review is requested for the reasons set forth in the Remarks section.

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, 18-20, 22-29, 31, 33, 39-41, 43, 44, 72, 74, 76, and 78-80 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sun et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,501,740 ("Sun") in view of Armstrong et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,807,423 ("Armstrong").

The cited art does not teach or suggest "presenting an option to specify a quorum associated with a meet-me conference call, in response to user input to an application program co-resident with a terminal" and "establishing a media transport channel after detecting that the quorum is established, in response to a user selecting the option, wherein the establishing the media transport channel joins the user to the meet-me conference call," as recited in claim 1. On

page 3 of the Final Office Action (“FOA”) mailed December 16, 2005, Armstrong is relied upon to teach these features of claim 1.

The portions of Armstrong cited in the rejection of claim 1 describe how a conference call service can act as a watching party in Armstrong’s system for maintaining presence information. The conference call service can subscribe to the system in order to be notified when one or more watched parties become available. Armstrong, col. 7. The conference call service can form watched parties into aggregates. “Then, once notifications of availability are given for a certain number of group members (e.g. a quorum, all members, etc.), the conference call is attempted.” Armstrong, col. 7, lines 56-60. The cited portions of Armstrong do not teach anything about how the conference call service itself operates, except with respect to the conference call service’s interactions with the system that provides the presence information.

Thus, the cited portions of Armstrong are completely silent with respect to how (or even if) a quorum could be specified. Armstrong does not suggest how, when, or even if a user should be presented with an option to specify a quorum, nor does Armstrong suggest the conditions under which such an option should be presented. More particularly, the cited portions of Armstrong clearly do not provide any teachings or suggestions to “present an option to specify a quorum... in response to user input to an application program co-resident with a terminal.” Sun, which provides no teachings at all with respect to quorums, also fails to teach or suggest this feature of claim 1, both alone and in combination with Armstrong. Accordingly, the combination of Armstrong and Sun fails to teach or suggest this element of claim 1.

One page 2 of the Advisory Action (“AA”) mailed March 15, 2006, the Examiner states that Personal Communications Portal (PCP) 10 (described in col. 5, lines 24-47 of Armstrong) is the “system that will provide the user ‘an option to specify a quorum.’” However, the cited portions of the reference merely describe how the PCP maintains and provides presence information. No mention of the PCP’s behavior with respect to conference calls or quorums is provided in the cited sections of Armstrong, nor are any teachings as to how (or even if) the PCP could behave as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, the cited portions of the reference clearly do not teach or suggest presenting an option to specify a quorum, as recited in claim 1.

Furthermore, the cited portions of Armstrong do not teach or suggest “establishing a media transport channel after detecting that the quorum is established, in response to a user

selecting the option, wherein the establishing the media transport channel joins the user to the meet-me conference call,” as recited in claim 1 (emphasis added). At best, Armstrong teaches: “once notifications of availability are given for a certain number of group members (e.g. a quorum, all members, etc.), the conference call is attempted” (emphasis added). However, this statement provides no details regarding whether a media transport channel is actually established, nor does this statement suggest any relationship between group members participating in the conference call and a user who selected an option to specify a quorum (as noted above, the cited portions of Armstrong are completely silent with regard to how, when, or even if a user specifies a conference call). Accordingly, the cited portions of Armstrong clearly do not teach or suggest establishing a media transport channel that joins a particular user to a meet-me conference call, in response to that particular user having selected an option to specify a quorum associated with the meet-me conference call. Sun, which does not mention quorums at all, also fails to teach or suggest this feature, either taken alone or in combination with Armstrong. Accordingly, claim 1 is further patentable over the cited art for this reason.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion to combine the references. Sun does not suggest that it would be desirable to use a system like Armstrong’s to identify when a quorum is available, and Armstrong does not suggest that a system like the one described in Sun (which makes no mention of quorums) would benefit from Armstrong’s system. Nevertheless, the Examiner contends that the claim 1 is obvious in light of the cited art: “Sun states of the desire to hold a meeting of principals in a business negotiation in col., lines 21-31 as [well] as a meeting between management and equity analysts. The Examiner believes this suggestion would enable one of ordinary skill in the art to add the feature of providing an option to specify who or how many participants are required in order for the meeting to take place since the intended meeting cannot go as planned if at least one person representing each party is not at the meeting.” FOA, page 14. However, this suggestion is simply not found in the cited portions of the reference.

The portions of Sun cited in the FOA describe how a user can specify the mode (e.g., speaking and listening versus listen only) in which the teleconference is available to a specific participant, list of participants, or all participants. “An important meeting of principals in a business negotiation may be specified full duplex to the principals, and listen-only to certain others. An example of such a teleconference is the periodic teleconference between the management of a company and equity analysts at brokerage houses.” Sun, col. 7, lines 14-34.

The cited portions of Sun are concerned with controlling the mode (full participation or listen only) in which the conference is available to different participants. The cited portions of Sun do not say that a meeting cannot take place if a member of a particular group is not present, nor do the cited portions of Sun suggest that it would be desirable to specify required participants for a given meeting. The cited portions of Sun also do not state or suggest that a meeting cannot proceed as planned if at least one person representing each party is not at the meeting. While the cited art does identify particular types of participants, merely identifying types of participants neither teaches nor suggests that the intended meeting cannot go as planned if at least one person representing each party is not at the meeting. The cited art also clearly does not suggest that it would be desirable to specify “who or how many participants are required,” as alleged by the FOA. Applicants also note that conference calls, such as described in col. 7 of Sun, can begin with fewer than all of the participants. In such a situation, participants that join the call early can simply wait on the line for additional participants to join. Participants could also select to leave the call and attempt to rejoin at a later time. Thus, there is clearly no inherent need recognized in Sun’s system for a feature that provides an option to specify who or how many participants are required in order for a meeting to actually take place. Accordingly, there is no suggestion to combine the references.

Claims 2-8, 10, and 18-20 are dependent upon claim 1, and are thus patentable over the cited art for the foregoing reasons. Claims 22-29, 31, 33, 39-41, 43, and 44 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

With respect to claim 72, the cited art fails to anticipate, teach or suggest “sending a token to a conference manager application, in response to a user selecting the option [to specify a quorum associated with a meet-me conference call], wherein the token comprises information indicating that the user will wait until the quorum is established before joining the meet-me conference call.” The cited portions of Armstrong merely teach that “once notifications of availability are given for a certain number of group members (e.g. a quorum, all members, etc.), the conference call is attempted.” Armstrong, col. 7, lines 58-60. Thus, in Armstrong’s system, the availability of a certain number of group members can be determined, and a conference call can be attempted based on the group members’ availability. While Armstrong teaches that notifications of availability can be provided for various group members, Armstrong is silent with respect to indications that a user will wait until a quorum is established before joining a meet-me


conference call. Notifications of availability are quite clearly not the same as indications that a user will wait until a quorum is established. Furthermore, Armstrong neither teaches nor suggests sending a token to a conference manager application as part of providing such notifications of availability. Thus, the cited portions of Armstrong clearly do not teach a token that indicates that a user will wait until a quorum is established before joining a meet-me conference call. Sun, both alone and in combination with Armstrong, also fails to teach or suggest such a token. For at least the foregoing reasons, the cited art fails to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 72. Claims 74, 76, and 78-80 depend from claim 72 and are patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claims 9, 11, 13-17, 30, 32, 34-38, 75 and 77 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sun in view of Armstrong and further in view of Eaton et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,483,588). Claims 21, 42, 73 and 81 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sun in view of Armstrong and further in view of Eaton and further in view of Jonsson (U.S. Pat. No. 6,272,214). Claims 9, 11, 13-17, 21, 30, 32, 34-38, and 42 are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claim 1. Claims 73, 75, 77, and 81 are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claim 72.

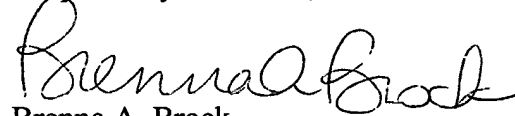
CONCLUSION

Applicants assert that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request that a finding withdrawing the final rejection of the claims be issued.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on April 17, 2006.


Attorney for Applicant(s)
4/17/2006
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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